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THE GOSPEL DIVINE.

"The gospel was not given only for learned men. There are at least nineteen in twenty, if not ninety-nine in a hundred, of those for whom the Scriptures were written, that are not capable of any certain or effectual conviction of their divine authority by such arguments as learned men make use of."—"We cannot rationally doubt but that things that are divine have a godlike, high, and glorious excellency in them, that does so distinguish them from the things that are of men, that the difference is ineffable, and therefore such as, if seen, will have a most convincing, satisfying influence upon one, that they are what they are, namely, divine."—*Jonathan Edwards: Treatise on the Religious Affections.*

In the pages of our last number, attention was directed to the needlessly vague conceptions of Christianity which prevail in many quarters. It may be thought that we have pledged ourselves to attempt a little more definiteness in this way, and are bound to give our answer to the question, "What is Christianity?" Let the present paper be accepted as a partial and poor fulfilment of any such pledge.

The question, "What is Christianity?" must be answered many times before it will have been completely answered. We can hardly hope to describe, in a single sentence, the Faith which claims all things past, present, and to come,—a Faith so filled with the spirit, the fulness of the Infinite One, that, almost like him, it reaches beyond our measures. All the various replies which various readers of the Bible have given to our question, are nearer right than any one of them; they all help to express the world-wide doctrine and work of Christ, the way of our deliverance through him. Our answer for the present is singly and simply

this : " Christianity is strictly, literally, a revelation from God."

This is an answer which all Christians alike return ; the unvarying reply from the beginning of the Christian era to this day ; a reply so general and so obvious that it may seem idle to insist upon it, and yet one of those familiar matters which, as we are in the habit of saying, may be passed over in a careless way, and of which the younger portion of the generation upon the stage certainly need to be reminded. When Christianity came into the world, when it burst into life in the Holy Land and in the cities of the Roman empire, it came and was received as a communication from Heaven, as an inspiration from the Almighty Father ; not as a new way of human thinking or of human feeling, — not as a discovery or device of human intelligence, a step forward in human progress, but as a fresh gift from the Source of all wisdom and all love. The message which the apostles carried about with them was not a message from one man to another, but from God to all of us. It was an unfolding of the Divine Mind. It was a lifting of the veil which hides from us the deep things of eternity. It was a gift of the Divine Glory to man. Its essence, its heart, that which made it a gospel, was a word from the mouth of God. This view of Christianity is absolutely fundamental. Should it ever be generally slighted, the peculiar value of the gospel would be so far lost.

With the mission of Jesus, there began a great movement in the mind, the heart, the life of the world, — a movement still vigorously advancing, and whose triumphs in store are greater even than its triumphs already secured. The kingdom of God came then, and it is to be established. There are Christian views of religion and of morality, of life in all its aspects, of suffering, of death, and of a future state : it infinitely concerns the health and the peace of the individual soul and the welfare of our race, that they be true, answering to realities, of God and not of man, coming from a source above any earthly fountain.

Clearly trace any lesson back to Christ ; show that it is a Christian lesson, and it should be enough. This should stamp it as divine. "Believest thou this?" said the Saviour to Martha ; and her reply was, "Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" and, so believing, your words must be truth to me. We want to have this faith in Christianity

now. The unlearned as well as the learned, the great mass of men want it. They want to feel, when they are reading the words of Jesus, that they are addressed by a messenger from God, who can tell them more than is contained in their own minds and hearts, who shall speak to them with authority, who shall be a true Mediator between heaven and earth, who shall help their unbelief. Authority is as essential to religion as freedom. Indeed, how can any of us be free from debasing errors, without the guidance of a soul providentially illumined beyond our measure! It is a strange and sad mistake to treat the joyful, confiding loyalty of the human heart to the world's prophets and the Son of God, as if it were a servitude, as if there were any real conflict between reason and faith. Is it any thing but a privilege to hear truth, and to be quickened by a spirit beyond our capacity and attainment? Is it any thing but a privilege to have that brought to us which we cannot help reverencing, to know that heaven is brought near to earth? It is essential to the success of the gospel in the world, that it be regarded as divine in its origin; a religion, a morality, a law, principle, and spirit of social order, not devised by men, however pure or wise, but revealed by God.

Now, by the consent of Christendom, nominally at least, this character attaches to Christianity; and yet it is very clear that much may be done to increase a Christian reverence and trust, to deepen and enlarge the faith of Christians in the gospel as a revelation from God, to make men really believe and feel and know that Jesus of Nazareth was declared to be the Son of God with power, and that he is entrusted with a message to every generation, and that the utmost confidence in him is our only wisdom and our only safety. There are always influences which tend to diminish this faith. Perhaps they do not abound now, any more than they have abounded in ages past. It is common, indeed, to say that our times are unfavorable to belief; but we find precisely the same complaint urged and sustained in the writings of every period not utterly sunk in darkness. The way of faith must ever be pointed out anew. Jesus, the Son of God, must be preached to each new generation. It is greatly to be desired that, by some plain lessons, the gospel should be presented afresh, not specially to the world of students, but to the intelligent and reflecting minds that are found outside of the schools. We may safely say of many

such minds, that, through inadvertence or prejudice or pre-occupation, they do no sort of justice to Christianity as a divine revelation, and consequently derive no special benefit from it. They are involuntarily and almost unconsciously gainers, so far as the gospel raises the general tone of society, and multiplies its resources of good : the bright sun and the fresh air will force their way a little into their houses, and so they are profited a little, though they never go abroad. But the secret of Christian loyalty, and the blessing that is in it, are not theirs. They have a religion yet to find, though Jesus hath been a long time in the world. We will endeavor to point out some of the causes of the want of a true faith in Christ.

I. A vast deal of faithlessness is nothing more or less than indifference, sheer neglect : it is simply to be ascribed to wilful ignorance, to a pre-occupied mind, which has passed by on the other side. Ordinarily, religion is not forced upon the attention of the world. It is quite likely, that, even during the acceptable year of the Saviour's ministry, there was many a Jew who regarded the Christian movement merely as a nine days' wonder, not worth dwelling upon. Between the earnest believer and the earnest unbeliever, there are those, not a few, who neither believe nor disbelieve, followers of the Gallio who cared for none of these things. They may catch a little of the prevailing speech of the times, whether it be religious or the contrary ; but it is simply cant, a mere imitation, — the public opinion, not theirs : they are telling what others believe or disbelieve ; they are bearing no testimony, on their own part, to any thing save their own shallowness and worldliness. We must pass them by.

II. And sometimes the want of a general appreciation of Christianity is to be attributed to a vague suspicion of every current religious belief, an extreme and dogmatic scepticism, a habit of doubting, an impatience of any authority, which is the natural opposite of extreme credulity. Religion has been so much discussed, so often made a matter of controversy, and its claims have been so much abated, that an indistinct impression has been created in some minds that there is nothing in it. It ought to be considered that unbelief is more unphilosophical than superstition ; that, of the two, he who believes too much is nearer right than he who believes nothing. If Christianity is not all that dogmatists and priests claim, it does not follow that it is nothing. On the

contrary, the fictions of the church suppose the solid foundation of gospel fact and truth. The Catholic insists, not only that Christianity is divine, but that the Church also is inspired, and every priest, by virtue of his office, a channel of divine grace; and even the authorized translations of the Scriptures holy, and the age of miracles not yet past: he multiplies legend upon legend, until, at length, faith breaks down under the enormous pressure; and the Catholic becomes a Protestant, and perhaps comes at last to look with a vague suspicion upon every thing save the veriest generalities of natural piety and morality. Through some such process a vague habit of doubt has been created, and has lowered the spiritual tone of many, who can give no account of their opinions, and yet are more or less influenced by the current of thought about them.

III. But, more than all, the divine character of the gospel, the seal of Heaven upon it, is hidden from many eyes through an entire misapprehension of the kind of evidence by which alone it can be made real beyond any question. The world is full of those who seek a sign from heaven, and who are ever complaining that the evidences for the divine origin of religion are inadequate. They say that a matter of such paramount importance ought to be put beyond peradventure; that there ought not to be left so much as an inch of ground upon which a doubt can stand; that the words of truth should be written upon the brow of heaven, or whispered in our ears by the voice of the wind; that, if the evidence is imperfect, faith must needs halt; and that it is the part of the highest wisdom and the most honest judgment to maintain one's self uncommitted. They urge, that, except perhaps during the night of superstition, there have always been two opinions amongst the learned as to the divine origin of Christianity; and, whilst the great majority have ever been on the side of faith, absolute certainty is out of the question, and the utmost that will be claimed is a very high degree of probability. "We cannot feel entirely sure of any thing which involves the genuineness and authenticity of human records. The very fact that a question has been raised by honest and learned men is fatal to that entire confidence which alone can satisfy and give rest to the soul. Real faith was at an end just so soon as doubts were earnestly raised. Implicit reliance, a complete surrender of the convictions and emotions, was no longer possible. Besides, we have neither time

nor talent to look up and weigh what you call evidence; we are neither antiquarians nor historians, and at best we can only have an opinion that the gospel is divine. Indeed, if the heavenly Father purposes to save us in this way, why does he not give a new religion to each new generation, — a religion specially adapted to its stage of progress, to its peculiar temptations, weaknesses, and sins, — a message to-day, for example, touching the points that are up to-day for discussion, — a fresh word, which nobody can misapprehend, touching our religious and moral controversies, our controversies about Trinity and Unity, about Atonement, Baptism, and the Supper, about Human Slavery, War, and the like? Why ask us to live so long upon an old revelation, the key to which seems to have been lost, the most ancient and revered form of which we all agree in reckoning superannuated and effete? Why leave us to the jargon of popes and bishops, or the puerile and safe generalities of ecclesiastical councils, that discuss to this very day the questions of the fourth and fifth centuries, without much promise of any more satisfactory results? Let it be, if you please, that Christianity was a revelation once: we want another now. Eighteen centuries have elapsed since Jesus preached to the Jews, and the world has changed a vast deal in that time." Difficulties which express themselves somewhat in this way trouble many minds, and have found a voice even in the popular literature; and the misapprehension upon which they rest has a place in the thoughts of not a few who never have followed it to its conclusions. It deserves to be honestly and plainly dealt with.

The confusion proceeds from a failure to apprehend the nature of the evidence which alone can entirely, finally, and for ever satisfy us that Christ is the Son of God, and his religion the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The error lies in supposing that those who do not feel the power of religion can be entirely satisfied of its truth, of the reality of its divine claim. That such may see many and strong reasons for believing, is most certain; but we do not understand how they can ever, under any circumstances with which thus far it has pleased God to favor us, get beyond a high probability, or escape the possibility of misgivings. It would be just so, we may judge, if we were to have a new religion to-morrow: we may judge so because such was the case in the very first years of the gospel. We do not find that the evidence for it was irresistible, except upon those who felt its power, those who had

ears to hear, eyes to see, hearts to understand. The Saviour was hopeless of all others. They could explain away miracles. They said he wrought them by the power of the prince of demons. That was no sufficient evidence for them. They considered the whole matter a delusion, a piece of fanaticism, incredible. If we had lived in those days, we could not have avoided believing, it is said; but a vast multitude, the majority for centuries, did avoid it, and were only swept in at last by the increasing wave of public belief, not much more truly persuaded then than before. We should believe, it is still urged, if miracles were wrought in our streets. Perhaps so; and yet it would be easy to name more than one writer who would maintain that a miracle is essentially incredible; that no amount of evidence can establish it; that, if we cannot explain it away, we must distrust our senses, or suspend our judgment.

The outward evidence for Christianity is a preparation for faith, and it helps often to confirm faith; and it has triumphantly sustained the assaults of ancient and modern scepticism; but it does not dispense with the inward testimony of a simple and honest and God-loving heart. To such hearts the gospel is offered. To such hearts Christ comes in his Father's name to give them rest. They can see that he is declared the Son of God with power, by his word and by his works, and by the fulfilment of his promises in their renewed and spiritual life. There must be a preparation of the heart, or revealed religion is ever incredible. Were it to be granted anew to-day, we may be sure that to many it would be as much as ever a stumbling-block. It would spring up in some quarter entirely strange and unlooked-for; it would be accounted a delusion, a fanaticism, an ultraism. The sceptics would be as sceptical as now, unless, indeed, they should betake themselves to the old religion, as the less of two evils, and as a kind of defence against the intruder, just as Jews and Pagans made a desperate effort to believe in their old faith, by way of opposing the new. There is a limit beyond which it has never pleased God to go in urging upon the soul conviction from external evidence. His messages do no violence to human intelligence in any of its forms. They are attended with outward signs, that fitly commend them to the unprejudiced; but of themselves, and through their own spiritual essence and life, they persuade the heart to a conviction which has ever been expressed by comparison with the

evidence of the senses, as sight. Says Jonathan Edwards, in his great treatise upon the Religious Affections, — a work, we need not add, replete with spiritual wisdom, — “The gospel of the blessed God don’t go abroad begging for its evidence, so much as some think : it has its highest and most proper evidence in itself.”

When we look at the evidence for the divinity of the gospel in this light, its antiquity can be no stumbling-block. Age cannot impair this highest testimony. The human heart and the voice of God to it are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Nay, more, the longer the gospel does its true work in the world, the longer it accomplishes its blessed mission of purifying and enriching the heart, the more does it prepare its own evidence, and make ready for its reception in its true divine character. “That they all may be one,” united, peaceful, was the prayer of Jesus for his disciples, adding, “That the world may believe that thou didst send me.” You must not look so eagerly for the divine sanctions of Christianity any longer in the records of history, though they are there : rather should they be firmly established in your hearts and in your renovated world ; a world so truly a kingdom of God through the blessed might of Jesus, that his divine mission may be unspeakably clear to you. “In those days, saith the Lord, I will write my law upon their hearts.” What matters it whether the Son of God came in the first century or in the eighteenth, if he tells me of a Father ever near and ever helpful, and if my experience to-day assures me that it is even so ? He hath shown me the Father, and it sufficeth me, even as it sufficed the disciples. And when the divine character of the gospel is recognized and joyfully believed with the whole energy of the spiritual and moral nature, the gospel does become a lesson for the day and hour ; it swiftly applies itself ; it is a great light poured into dark places. How the matters which mere theologians magnify are dwarfed in the presence of the divine majesty of Christ ! How insignificant do they become in proportion as the heart more and more earnestly and reverently believes in the Lord Jesus ! And, as to a more explicit revelation of the will of God concerning the great moral subjects of the times, does any one need it whose heart is in fellowship with the heart of Christ, who has not rested in Christian ceremonies or dogmas, instead of advancing to a living Christian faith ; who believes in that love which is the fulfilling of the law ? We have already, unless we are

blind and dead, the great principles of all holiness and righteousness : it is a small thing that we are asked to apply them. Until we are vehemently urged to do so, we can hardly be said to have any very earnest conviction that the Saviour came upon a divine errand to the world.

We said that the gospel is a revelation from God, in the most literal sense ; and that, if we would gain the highest good from it, we must so receive it. And now we are entitled to add, that in saying this we have not laid upon any a burden of nice speculation beyond their strength. So far as knowledge may be made to serve religion, it is well ; but all have not this knowledge. And yet there is a place for them. Let them read their New Testaments with open, willing, teachable hearts. Let them not shun, but seek for, the light. Let them strive to live as they believe, and to believe as they live. Faith will come by the word of God. John Bunyan, the poor tinker, author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, or George Fox, the poor shoemaker, founder of the sect of Quakers, had as firm faith in Christianity as the learned Lardner with his ponderous volumes of Jewish and Heathen Testimony. "Whom, having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonas ; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." "Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit." Every humblest heart may draw from the gospel its divine assurance, putting it to the proof. Every humblest heart may gain, in the way of religious and moral experience, a reverent trust in Christ, which shall open the treasures of spiritual and moral wisdom, and impart inexhaustible strength. Is this, or is it not, one of the many lessons which men are learning, with what is called the progress of intelligence, that Christ came into the world in the fulness of the Divine Spirit, the Son of man, who was in heaven whilst he was on the earth ? In answer to the question, "What is Christianity ?" can they say thus much distinctly and in all good conscience, "It is a word from the mouth of God" ?

R. E.

LETTER TO A STUDENT IN RELIGION.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — . . . This irregular beginning makes me think of the "two unfinished letters" you confess in your apology for delay. As if they did not aggravate the offence! I never began a sheet to you in my life without scribbling all four sides over: why should you treat me better, or rather worse? If you'd only write, whenever you felt like it, one page or six, as the case might be, and seal and send it, as I do mine to you, — willing to be ashamed of matter and manner both; believing with that most "orthodox" divine, Dr. Payson, that the worse-looking the letter, the more love it showed, (shade of Payson, forgive the exaggeration!) — I should be so glad! Workers and sufferers in life and for it, let us lend each other a helping hand, without waiting for gloves. — I think I never received a letter from you that touched me more nearly, or pleased me more, than what you call your "incoherent" one. And as you gave me that dearest proof of friendship from a sensitive mind, a glimpse at least into that "inner chamber of the heart," so sacred that God himself seems to close the doors on all human eyes, you will forgive my errors of judgment if I speak freely in return. What you said about my having helped you, surprised me; but I was not pained by it, as I should have been once. I have learned from your friendship, and another of God's own giving, how much he does for us, by even the slightest proof of that human love which shadows forth his own.

In my thoughts and feelings concerning you, there is one predominant; one in which even my imperfect knowledge and sympathy may help you, possibly. You and I, my dear friend, have been led differently in some respects; by education and natural bias, very differently, I know. But still, do we not stand, in a sense, together? Both tired of self-culture and self-help; convinced that Combe's Constitution of Man is not the Bible, nor next to it; sick of the coldness and barrenness of Naturalism; our hearts crying out for a better and dearer faith, — that faith that inspired Paul's Letters and the world's Martyria; that burns now, as through all the ages, in every true Christian soul. From

moral philosophy; from sermons that breathe neither the name nor the spirit of Christ; from books that level him who lived before Abraham was, in the bosom of the Father, with men born thousands of years after Abraham, who scarcely heard of Christ, we turn gladly to the Word from Heaven.

Let us, then, learn together, once and for ever, one gracious lesson. Let us hear and believe, as millions have done before us, those blessed words that fell from the human lips of Jesus into human ears; that now, in his more spiritual life with men, his vital union with the body of his church, flow as really from his great heart into our weak and erring ones. Mary of Bethany sat at his feet in her own house: you and I may do so at this moment. When his very soul was melted by the tenderness of the words that blessed a bitter parting, John, the loved disciple, laid his head on the breast of Jesus. As dear an intimacy with the Lord of our life is not forbidden us in any trial. Our personal share in the great sacrifice is proved to our understandings, when Christ says: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends: ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Would that our lives might take up the assurance, if not by a perfect obedience, but by a prayerful submission!

Put out of sight, the many, many thousands that have thus come to their Saviour, lived with him daily, walked through all the blessing and terrors of their experience, with their hands in his, with their soul's very life-blood drawn from him. Forget all this "cloud of witnesses" for a little while, and imagine that you and I, alone on the earth, receive the message of our Redeemer. He comes to us, with our sins and our sorrows; with our strivings after the Infinite, with all those phases of spiritual life, and dim yearnings of an immortal soul, which language is utterly powerless to express. He comes to us; and when we do believe in him, and cannot help it, we hear him saying, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. No man cometh unto the Father but through me. I am the Vine; and he that abideth not in me is cast forth as the severed branch, and withered. I am the Bread of Life, and he that eateth me shall live by me. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

When we hear such words as these, such astounding claims

upon our confidence, our love, our obedience, what are we to do to be saved, but what Peter told the centurion, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"? What shall answer the inevitable "cry for guidance and help" that rises from every living soul, save that invitation, with its unfathomable depth of love, "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? Not—read the words of a Hebrew Prophet, crucified and embalmed eighteen hundred years ago; but "Come unto me," unto "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" unto the same Jesus who fed the multitudes, wondering as they ate, and still feeds the world. For he, ever since Mary became "blessed among women," has been the personal friend of every disciple, as well as the Light of the world.

Infidels may admire the divine beauty of his character; humanitarians eulogize the Ideal Man; lovers of nature more than lovers of God may steal his lesson from the lilies that surpassed Solomon's glory, and the grass that God so wonderfully clothes, without faith or gratitude. But for us there wait better things. An hour with the Incarnate Truth convinces these shallow estimates of folly, if not of sin. We cannot weigh the ocean by measuring its surface. There is a depth beyond.

Philip asked for the showing of the Father: he was for ever answered. So are we when our souls cry out for God. If we say, "How is it, Lord, that thou wilt manifest thyself to us?" we have, like the apostle, not an explanation, but the repeated promise from lips that cannot lie. Do we ask, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" we are told, "The work of God is to believe on him whom he hath sent."

And now, when God hath given us a Way, how foolish the attempt to climb to him by some Babel of our own and others' building! When the infinite chasm between the Father, in his Omnipotent Holiness, and his children, weak and simple as they are, is bridged over by that great mystery, "God manifest in the flesh," why wait longer for the At-one-ment?

The solemn question rises, and must be answered: Can our free-will choose here, except as it can choose sin anywhere? When Christ says, "All authority is given me in heaven and in earth," are your soul and mine left to themselves? Those tones of thunder (which no weight of ages can silence) from the very mouth of God, "This is my beloved Son; *hear ye him*,"—are

they shut out from our ears, and ours only? "Can we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

We will not stop to weigh the awful alternatives that hang on such a question. Our daily prayer shall be, "Let us also, O Father! know, with all saints, the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; let us have the joy and peace of a life hid with Christ in thee!"

And if the miracles trouble you, and if I fear to trust myself to the Son, lest I should dishonor the Father, and neither doubt is reasonable nor right, let us still "follow on to know the Lord." The blessing will surely rest on us, as on the Thomas whose unbelief was killed at last.

I am sorry if I have wearied you, or seemed to preach a sermon. I meant only to do as I have, — let my pen run on, and my heart with it. The new light that is slowly rising on my soul, I am more anxious you should have it than for any other person. Do write to me as freely as I have to you, if you feel willing to do so. God love and keep you!

Yours, very truly,

H. S. T.

A service of a more private nature, which adds most assuredly to the beauty and dignity of the religious character, must not be forgotten. It is that of family worship. It is a grave charge, but it is true, and the utterance of the truth may do us good: as a denomination, we are sadly deficient in this devotional element, — that which must form the basis and enter into the life of the highest morality, and fuse itself into the heart of the divinest character. Every domestic circle should have its altar, and every family hearth should have its offering. This form of worship cannot be neglected with impunity; it cannot be nurtured without success. If the child is conscious of no prayers coming from the father's lips, if he hears no solemn invocations to the Most High, why should he feel that his home is a Christian home, and rests beneath the overshadowing presence of God? There must be some service that shall fitly express this devotional element, that shall feed this interior flame in the heart of our domestic life. —

J. F. Brown.

WOMAN'S MISSION.

At morn, I marked a maiden, with a grandsire old and gray ;
And her beauty was so winsome, that I loitered on my way :
I saw her hands were laden with a tiny freight of flowers,
Culled from the field and garden, where she passed the morning
hours.

As I journeyed on alone, and roved through field and plain,
I marked a gentle lassie as she held the golden grain ;
And a youth was by her side : in pure womanhood she seemed
Like a living " thing of beauty," which in sleep hath on me
beamed.

I lingered by a stream ; and there I met with one
Whom riper age had graced, and a matron's love had won ;
And the guardian at her side, as she leaned upon his arm,
Seemed to feel his soul protected, while protecting her from
harm.

And farther on, at eventide, I met an aged pair,
And woman's love in age, indeed, was still more strong and fair ;
For on and on they wandered, and together went their way,
And tranquil was their eve of life, as bright had been their day.

This, *this* is " woman's mission," in her services below :
To cheer the heart of age with hope, and bless the home of woe, —
To guide the young, — maturer life from mammon to beguile, —
And, from her birthday till her last, on every scene to smile.

ARRITA.

FAITH.

FAITH, — an unwavering, all-sustaining faith in God, — a faith that will alike stand the shock of those overpowering afflictions which come immediately from the hand of God, and the wear of those nameless, petty trials which he allows to come from the perverseness of man, or through some other medium, — such a faith is the desire of every Christian. Such a faith is in some measure attained by every Christian. In some it seems to have reached perfection; so that, though there may be a momentary struggle and a natural shrinking, as the hour of trial approaches, when it is seen to be inevitable, there is nothing in the heart but submission and childlike trust.

Perfect faith in the overruling providence of God, and in the wisdom and love of all his dispensations, is the only firm ground of trust amid the vicissitudes and trials of this earthly state. But in different individuals this faith seems to take different forms; and it may be an interesting question, What is the legitimate province of faith, and what its highest manifestation? Perhaps its mode of operation may depend somewhat on temperament. The person of cheerful, sanguine temperament counts on nothing but the success of his plans; and, when this natural disposition is sanctified by Christian faith, there is still the same looking-for of what we call good, and good only; while others, whose theoretical belief in the beneficent providence of God is equally strong, are all their lifetime subject to apprehensions of coming trial.

There have been those who were looked upon as shining examples of this Christian grace; in whose lives it seemed to be manifested rather by the expectation of some particular things, which they esteemed good, than by a general and submissive trust in the wisdom and love of all the divine appointments. At least, this is made the prominent point by their biographers. Their trust in Providence appears, from what is related of them, to have been rather dictatorial in its form; as it were, obliging Providence to operate in the way which they themselves should point out. Such, for instance, was the case with Stilling, and still more remarkably with a certain clergyman of former times. There are, indeed, situations in which we can do nothing else but trust

in God for those earthly blessings which are usually the product of human exertion; but, as a general thing, it seems almost a compelling of Providence to our own ends, when we sit down quietly, in circumstances that appear to require exertion on our part, trusting that our wants will be supplied in some unforeseen way. Such was the case with the last-mentioned personage, when he turned a deaf ear to the representation of his wife, one Saturday morning, that they had no wood. We can hardly find fault with the faith that led him to go to his study, rather than to provide for the wants of his family, since it seems to have been accepted of Heaven; for the wood came in an unexpected way that same morning. So in the case when the same person gave away his wife's only pair of shoes, before she rose, on a cold morning, to a beggar-woman, in the assurance that their place would be supplied before night. It was done unto him according to his faith, as it was in other instances. But, however sustaining such a faith might have been to him, one cannot but feel that it did not render him always the most comfortable companion to her who depended on him for support. We will not blame the man, who undoubtedly acted conscientiously, though often to the discomfort of those with whom he was closely connected; but we would say with the Scotchman, "I dinna arguy that it is wrang to trust in Providence: only Providence is no obliged to help us, if we winna help ourselves."

Amid all the faithlessness of the world, it is hard to chide any manifestation of trust in God. There is much beauty in this implicit reliance on a higher Power; and yet it would seem to have its dangers. Were the expectation of this preternatural aid, as it may be called, always answered, there would be no stimulus to exertion, and all activity and force of character would be lost. On the other hand, when the expectation was disappointed, there would be a shock to the faith which had been accustomed to rely on such an answer to its prayers.

A far higher form of faith than this, — higher even from its humility, — is that which follows rather than leads; accepting, in meekness of trust, every appointment of the Father; leaving all with him, in the full assurance that all will be well, though perhaps far different from what the heart would naturally choose. He who has this perfect reliance on the unerring wisdom and love that govern all things will not seek to direct the course of Pro-

vidence. He knows his own short-sightedness and blindness, and that even those things which seem most necessary to his happiness might prove a snare. He is permitted to hope and believe that particular events will be ordered in a manner accordant with his natural desires; but his heart is prepared for the disappointment of those hopes, and his faith suffers no shock, even where human reason is lost in darkness. He knows that, in this world of mingled joy and sorrow, he must often be called to walk through paths which he would not choose; to meet trials from which nature shrinks appalled. He will sometimes cry in anguish of soul, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" yet, when it is presented to his lips, he will receive it, acknowledging the hand of the Father. He may fear, as he enters into the cloud; but, when its dark folds settle about him, he will find there the glorified form of the Son of God. Such a faith can stand unshaken amid the contending elements of the world, and the surging billows of affliction, firm as the Rock of Ages in which it trusts. It is not, with stoical philosophy, insensible to human affections or griefs; but it sanctifies and perfects the former, and from the latter makes itself wings on which to soar to heaven. It can see its dearest earthly hopes depart; and, looking upward through the tears of bereaved affection, say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord!"

"Lord, give us such a faith as this;
And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en here the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home."

THE voluntary principle, in which we glory, has, indeed, no value to an indolent, selfish, and worldly church. It will even prove an immeasurable evil to our land, if the sense of personal responsibility is not found in some of our citizens, to such an extent as to secure a comprehensive survey and observation of the entire field; watching, with a patriotic and Christian solicitude, the progress and the perils of particular sections, and of the whole country; and if there be not a hand outstretched to help the weak, and to work for the indolent, so far as to give the whole country all the institutions necessary to form a Christian civilization. — *Selected.*

MANAGING CHILDREN.

THERE are a few subjects for conversation and controversy, which never fail to excite our feelings. Such are the best mode of bringing up children, and the best methods of housekeeping.

I lately had a short debate upon the question, whether *immediate* obedience of children should in all cases be expected and required. On the one side, it was urged that a command implies *immediate* obedience, and that any delay of obedience destroys its very nature, and makes the authority of the parent null and void. On the other side, it was submitted that it takes some little time for the will of a child to be changed; and that compelling immediate obedience, either by the tone of voice, or the expression of the face, or by using corporal punishment, inflicts an injury upon the child's character which may, and should, be avoided. No one will contend that children should have their own way in every thing; no one likes to see a parent overruled by his children; no one approves of changing *no* into *yes*, and *yes* into *no*, for no other reason than the teasing or crying of children. On the contrary, no one likes to see a parent exacting some petty submission to his will, or frightening a child into a compliance with his requirements, or buying his acquiescence with sweetmeats and toys.

The organ-grinder in our streets can make his monkey bow, and take off his cap, and roll over, and climb into parlor windows, and perform several other pleasing antics, by dint of hard usage; and so, any parent can, if he is determined, make his little child go through with ever so many pretty sayings and doings, to amuse the company, after being drilled for it.

There is, I admit, something very fascinating about the appearance of a battalion of soldiers, or a large school of children, where one will pervade the whole. All eyes are looking at the leader for direction; and every movement and every sound have their origin in some signal given by the one in authority. It is gratifying to the love of dominion thus to rule a multitude. It is gratifying to some parents thus to rule their children from the earliest infancy; to cow them down into submission; to make them understand that their commands are instantly to be obeyed.

And who are these parents that are praised for bringing up their children in this magisterial manner? Many of them are profane in their language, and outrageous in their anger. Many of them do not profess to rule their own spirits, or to be in subjection to the Father of their spirits. Frequently they have open and violent quarrels among themselves; and seldom do they care to worship God in the sanctuary, or to sit in meekness at the feet of Jesus to learn the worth of a holy character. Many are the dark and dismal hours they pass, harboring evil spirits in their hearts; and many are the sorrows of *their* parents, caused by their careless or wicked conduct; and yet these are the model parents that are held up to shame those who never speak harshly to their children, and who have their honest doubts about their right to require unqualified and implicit obedience from any one.

And who are those who make some of their friends angry with them, for letting their children grow up under a mild and conciliatory form of government? Some of them have, from their childhood, been studying the ways of the divine government, — been diligently inquiring of the Lord, how they should deal with their fellow-men in the several relations of life. Many of them have arrived at a clear insight of truth and love, sufficient at least to keep their own souls free from profaneness and wrath and irreverence; and is it possible, in the nature of things, that such persons would adopt a less perfect, a more odious mode of educating and disciplining their children than the former class of parents? The higher a man's appreciation of the worth of human nature, the more careful he is not to interfere with its free and healthy development.

These parents, that get so many impatient rebukes from others because they do not rule with the rod of iron, are conscientiously striving to influence the hearts and minds of their children, in the well-founded hope that they will see and feel for themselves what is right and obligatory for them to do. A patient, self-controlled parent will be willing to endure many hardships, before he will teach his children to fear the person of man. He will keep pouring and pouring copious streams of precept and example into the heart of his child; not doubting that, as the will is moved by the affections and by the convictions, so, out of their abundance, his child will act and speak and live. The Christian parent tells his children that they have no master nor father on the earth,

seeing that God alone is supreme in authority, and that all we are fellow-mortals, alike limited and frail, and liable to err and sin. Such a parent feels the difficulty of managing his children. He does not pretend to bring up his children as he wishes they might be brought up. He considers the whole subject open to careful consideration. He has his doubts whether he ought ever to strike a blow upon his children, lest they too would use the same expressions and violence upon their playmates, and quote their parents for authority. He asks to be enlightened; and he asks for leniency from others in their judgment. But one thing seems very certain, — that people who do not control their own tempers, or exercise a benevolent spirit toward all men, would do well to look at home, and mend their own dispositions and characters, and make themselves happier in their every-day experience, instead of priding themselves upon making their little children mind just what they say. We will see, when our children have all grown up, which set turn out with the best characters, and with the best qualifications for usefulness and happiness.

HYMN-BOOK. — In any system of public worship, the *constant* element — that is to say, the *liturgical* — will always exercise a great influence over the variable part, — the extemporaneous, — in giving it tone and direction, and in preserving a doctrinal consistency in the pulpit teaching. It will be so at least wherever this liturgical ingredient warmly engages the feelings of the people, and where it is performed with untiring animation. In communities that have laid aside liturgies in every other sense, the Hymn-book which they use, especially if psalmody be a favored part of public worship, rules, as well the preacher as the people, to a greater extent than is often thought of, or than would perhaps be acknowledged. The Hymn-book to such bodies comes in the stead of creed, articles, canons, and presiding power. Isaac Watts is still held in grateful remembrance by those who use his devotional compositions; but there may be room to think, that, in the course of these hundred and fifty years past, he has rendered services to them in behalf of which they have not yet blessed his memory, and perhaps may never do so. — *Isaac Taylor.*

REPENTANCE.

A SERMON BY REV. W. P. TILDEN.

Acts xvii. 30: "But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent."

THE Bible is so full of earnest calls to repentance, that one scarcely need point to any particular passage as proof of its necessity. Wherever sin is found, there is, and ever must be, the necessity of repentance, in order to secure a rescue and deliverance from that sin. Hence we find it so frequently enforced, the Bible through. Repent! It was the authoritative and startling call of the ancient prophets. It was the cry of the Saviour's forerunner, when from the wilderness he came forth to announce the coming of the Son of man in his kingdom. And when, in fulness of time, the Saviour himself entered upon his holy ministry of reconciliation, the first word of public exhortation that he gave to the souls he came to save, was "Repent." So, too, when the disciples, at the bidding of the Master, went forth to prepare the way for the new kingdom, and hasten its coming, they opened their new message with the same heart-searching exhortation, — *Repent!*

The world has not yet outgrown the need of repentance, for the simple reason that it has not outgrown sin.

But what is implied by repentance? We want definite and clear conceptions of the doctrine, that we may better understand the duty. Repentance, in general terms, is often defined as sincere sorrow for sin, compunction of conscience for wrong-doing. But this definition is not broad enough to cover the Bible idea of repentance. Simple sorrow for sin, even when sincere, may, and often does, end in sorrow, without effecting any radical change in the life. This, of course, is not to be reckoned as true repentance. A person may be visited with most unfeigned sorrow and shame for his misdeeds or general misliving, from quite low and unworthy motives; motives purely selfish. Or, even where the motives are of a higher character, the sorrow and contrition may, for the time, be most sincere, and yet not effectual to repentance; for how many have felt this sorrow, and given to it free and

heartfelt utterance, who have soon relapsed again into the very condition over which they mourned !

Neither is sorrow, however sincere, accompanied with the resolution of amendment, however solemn, repentance in its full and perfect sense. They are the two first steps in the redeeming work ; but they may both be taken, and the soul not be saved from its sins. Such, too often, is the repentance of the poor inebriate, who, in his hours of sober thought, will pour out the bitterest tears of sorrow and shame in view of his debasement, and vow before God, with the sincerest purpose, to dash for ever from his lips the accursed cup that has made his wife a more than widow, and his children worse than fatherless ; but if this purpose, however sincere, be not carried into action, if the cup be not for ever dashed away, his bitter tears and firm resolves are vain. He has been penitent ; but he has not repented, and he may go on thus weeping, and resolving, and *sinning* for ever. And for ever, as he lifts his eyes to the celestial city, he will see written over its gates, in characters that no mortal power can erase, "The drunkard cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

Tears and resolves, then, are not the whole of repentance. They are but the beginning of that great work in which the angels of God rejoice. Repentance, in its full and complete sense, is the *real turning of the soul to God*. It implies an entire, thorough, radical change in those affections that have been alienated. The Bible-call to repentance is expressed in language most significant : "Turn ye, turn ye ; for why will ye die ?" It is not enough to be sorry simply, or to mourn and resolve. The soul must be *turned*, — turned from the love and practice of evil to the love and practice of good. For never, till the moral and spiritual laws of God's universe are obliterated or annulled, can there be any escape from the consequence of a sinful condition, but in the true *turning* of the soul to God.

But to see clearly the nature of repentance, and acknowledge in general terms its importance, is one thing : to make a faithful application of it to one's individual soul, is quite another. Which is the most important need not be told. It is marvellous how men content themselves, and quiet their consciences, with certain confessions of general sinfulness, — sinfulness that is shared in common with the race, with no thought, apparently, of any faithful application of repentance as a personal duty. But

of what avail is the confession of sin without the forsaking of it? True, it is written for our encouragement, that, "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity." But surely it is not mere lip-confession that the apostle links with this precious promise, — a confession in words only, leaving heart and life just where they were before. When the confession is a true expression of a real change in the inward feelings and affections, then, indeed, the promise may be appropriated, with the assurance that God's good spirit will work together with the repentant soul in "cleansing from all iniquity." But confessions that have not life or soul enough to convert themselves into practice, cannot be genuine. Words that come from the heart are always translating themselves into deeds, and thus revealing their paternity. They are known by their fruits. Sin is not put away by mere acknowledgments of sinfulness in general. One might as well think to cleanse his body by only confessing his need of being washed, without ever applying the purifying water.

And it is not to the grossly wicked alone that the call to repentance is made. The solemn injunction comes to "all men, everywhere, to repent." So, when the apostles were sent out by the Saviour on their holy mission, we are told, "They went out and preached that *men* should repent." Not this class of men, or that; not the Scribes alone, or the Pharisees or Sadducees or Publicans alone, but all men. So the Saviour said to the self-righteous Jews, "Think you that they on whom the tower of Siloam fell were sinners above all others? I tell you nay; but unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

It must be acknowledged that in all, to a greater or less extent, back of all specific and particular sins, there is *sin*, sinfulness, a state of the affections not in harmony with God, that needs repentance and change, — a perverse will, selfish and unsanctified, that must be humbled and brought into subjection to God; false aims and objects in life that must be corrected, before the soul is prepared to enter the upward path.

We err, therefore, we greatly err, if we fancy that only they who are guilty of great sins are called to repentance. I do not mean to intimate that all are alike guilty; this would be to abolish all moral distinctions; but only to say what the Bible so clearly teaches, that we all do need repentance towards God,

and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ ; and that, back of all single acts of transgression, there is a spirit of the mind that needs to be humbled, quickened, converted, by repentance and the renewing spirit of God. The soul, when it is truly awake to spiritual realities, looks through the surface, and is often more thoroughly humbled by a sense of this *inward* unworthiness than by any outward sins. And, under that conviction, it will often give expression to feelings that seem extravagant and unintelligible to those who think only of external conformity to the common standards of right and duty. How forcibly the following lines, written by one whose memory we love to cherish, illustrates this ! —

"It is not what my hands have done
That weighs my spirit down, —
That casts a shadow o'er the sun,
And over earth a frown.
It is not any heinous guilt,
Or vice by men abhorred.
For fair the fame that I have built,
A fair life's just reward ;
And men would wonder if they knew
How sad I feel with sins so few.

Alas ! they only see a part,
When thus they judge the whole ;
They cannot penetrate the heart,
They cannot read the soul.
But I survey myself within,
And mournfully I feel
How deep the principle of sin
Its root may there conceal,
And spread its poison through the frame,
Without a deed that men can blame.

They judge by actions which they see
Brought out before the sun ;
But conscience brings reproach to me
For what I've left undone, —
For opportunities of good
In folly thrown away,
For hours misspent in solitude,
Forgetfulness to pray ;
And thousand more omitted things,
Whose memory fills my breast with stings.

And therefore is my heart oppressed
 With thoughtfulness and gloom ;
 Nor can it hope for perfect rest,
 Till I escape this doom.
 Help me, Thou merciful and just,
 This fearful doom to fly !
 Thou art my strength, my hope, my trust :
 Oh, help me, lest I die !
 And let my full obedience prove
 The perfect power of faith and love."

This effusion of penitent thought is well called by the writer of it, "Self-knowledge."

It is when, with searching self-scrutiny, we look within, letting the pure light of Christ shine full upon us, that we are made to feel our need of "a clean heart and a right spirit." And if the sincere Christian often feels that, how much more reason for the feeling have those who as yet have given little or no thought to the great work of life ; or who, whatever may have been their thought upon religious matters, have never been humbled before God in the spirit of unfeigned repentance !

True repentance, I think, does not often, if ever, come from a cold and critical examination of those moral laws which indicate the certainty of retribution. There is but little power in moral philosophy to bring about any pungent sense of sin. Such philosophy is useful in its place. It comes in to confirm and strengthen convictions which the heart has been made to feel under other influences. But of itself it has little power to lead the soul to God. One may have a very clear conviction of the certainty of retribution, without being moved to repentance. What is most needed to be seen and felt is not merely our relation to the law, but to the *law-maker*. While only the relation to an abstract law is recognized, little more than an abstract repentance will be likely to be produced. Even if reform in some respects should follow, it would probably be *outward*, rather than inward ; for it would lack that living, quickening impulse, that flows only from the soul's *conscious* relation to God.

What is it that awakens penitence and contrition in the heart of a child who has disobeyed parental counsel ? It is not the thought of any outward correction to which he has exposed himself. *That* he would willingly bear ; for conscience tells him it is deserved. But it is the thought of the wrong done to the parent,

— of the wound inflicted on a heart that loves him. It is this that troubles him when he lies down at night, and when he rises up in the morning, — that follows him as his shadow, and gives him no peace or rest, till, with gushing tears and trembling lips, he humbly asks forgiveness. Had there been no consciousness of the *sacred* relation subsisting between the parent and the child, there had been no repentance. There might have been some outward reform, but none of that heartfelt contrition that is the essence of a godly sorrow. So with us. It is the clear recognition of our relation to God, not merely to his law, but to God the ever-living Father, that is needed to humble and subdue our hearts. The law, indeed, with all its penalties, must be proclaimed; but if separated from God, and studied only as we study the laws of chemistry, it is shorn of its mightiest power. It leaves the affections untouched. The truly repentant one thinks more of its sins against God than of retribution, or of any moral injury it has suffered by disobedience. That could be borne; but when the thought comes home upon the heart that sin has been committed, not only against one's own soul, but against the great Father of all souls, — against Divine Love itself, — then the fountains of the great deep are broken up. Then the tears flow, and the knees bend. Then bursts forth the language of true conviction, "Against Thee, and Thee only, have I sinned, and done done this evil in thy sight."

It is the dawning of this consciousness of the intimate *personal relation* the soul sustains to its God and Father, more perhaps than any thing else, that marks the beginning of the Christian life. This it is that turns the eye inward, humbles the soul, awakens prayer, repentance, and puts one in a proper attitude to receive forgiveness and the divine aid. Who is there that can look back upon his life, under a full sense of his relation to the "All-Pure," and think for a moment that, in thought and deed and word, he stands before the Lord blameless? There are seasons of anointed vision, when the spirit looks deeper than the outward life, and finds small comfort in the thought that great crimes have been avoided. Well do I remember the expression of a friend, who, in telling me of new religious convictions he had recently felt, said, in reference to his previous life: "I have not *thought right* — I have not *thought right*." His outward character was free from reproach. I do not remember that

even rumor, with her thousand tongues, ever accused him of immoralities. But, in a favorable hour, some of God's good angels led him to serious reflection. He looked deeper than the world could see; and there he saw what startled him, and made him feel the need of God's forgiving love, — made him feel, that, however fair his outward life had been when tried by worldly standards, his *thoughts*, his aims, his purposes, had not been right in the sight of God; and that *internally*, if not externally, he needed repentance, forgiveness, regeneration.

Truly God does call upon "all men everywhere to repent." I do fear that this important truth is too little considered. I fear that *sin* is getting to be looked upon with a most fatal complacency. It would seem as if the very word "*repentance*" was becoming obsolete in some quarters, superseded by the more popular and pleasant phrases, "Self-culture" and "Progress." Self-culture and progress are noble words; and, when based on Christian truth, suggestive of noble deeds. I have rejoiced to see them finding their way into the pulpit, and the best literature of our day. But it must never be forgotten that the highest form of self-culture is based upon "repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ;" that the progress that is to bless the world is the progress of that Divine Spirit that draws men through REPENTANCE and FAITH into more perfect harmony with God, and inspires them with a truer love for one another. Self-culture, therefore, and progress, are no substitutes for repentance. It is, rather, only through repentance that they become possible in a world like ours. For, without this basis, self-culture might minister only to a Pharisaic or æsthetic pride; and progress, unless the soul is first set in the right way, might only lead into darker and more tangled paths.

Let us, therefore, as we value the highest form of self-culture and the truest progress, seek first to bring our souls into a right condition before God, that we may know our weaknesses and wants, and listen reverently to the voice that "calls upon all men everywhere to repent."

EGYPT.

THERE is a period between the accounts of Joseph and Moses, consisting of 430 years, on which sacred and profane history are both silent. Much light has been thrown upon it by the recent discoveries of M. Champollion, who has, with great labor and ingenuity, invented a key to the hieroglyphics of Egypt, which has unlocked the stores of learning of the Egyptian priesthood, and has placed before us, as clearly as a written language could have done, the astonishing civilization of that remote period.

These discoveries not only make us acquainted with the princes, their mode of government, the customs and manners of the people, but the state of the arts, their wars, the customs of surrounding nations : even the portraits of their kings and queens are identified with perfect accuracy. We here give an extract from Rossellini's illustrations, who has been more successful than Champollion in deciphering these characters : —

"All the gorgeous details of the haughty courts of the Pharaohs, of which we merely obtain glimpses in the Bible, are brought before us with the vivid efficacy of some phantasmagoric exhibition of departed things and persons. We see the portraits of the Pharaohs, who received and elevated Joseph as his prime minister, given with the accuracy of a portrait of William the Fourth."

We see the superb chairs, couches, sofas, footstools, tables, and beaufets, exhibited by Rossellini. Gold and silver tureens, urns, banqueting cups, &c. of the most exquisite workmanship, and tasteful as well as magnificent forms.

The period of history to which we now allude was that of the eighteenth dynasty, containing the arrival of Joseph in Egypt, and his viceroyship under Amenoph, during whose reign the Hebrew colony was established in Egypt ; and it was under this brilliant dynasty that the departure of the children of Israel, under Moses, occurred. Manetho, the most ancient historian of Egypt, calls Moses, Osarsiph, a priest of Heliopolis.

He likewise states two remarkable points respecting the history, which he says he copied from the Hermaic tablets and the obelisks written by Thoth, the same with Enoch, the son of Cain,

and placed in subterranean apartments and winding passages near the sounding statue of Memnon at Thebes. This historian likewise introduces us to a race of Hebrews, consisting of eight hundred thousand, who were compelled to labor in the stone-quarries on the eastern bank of the Nile. Among these pictorial representations, the Jews are easily identified, not only from their physiognomy, but from their being always the same. These Jews are employed, under the dynasty of the kings contemporary with Moses, in the specific art of slavery, which he and Manetho both describe, making bricks and working in the quarries. An Egyptian task-master superintends their work; and the bricks are precisely those which are found in walls, the dates of which belong to the period in question.

The sublime and magnificent monuments erected by this ancient race of monarchs on the plain embraced by "hundred-gated Thebes" attest, to this day, their taste, their ambition, their wealth, and their power.

It was on that myriad-columned plain, beneath its gorgeous archways and gigantic colonnades, that Champollion exclaimed, "These porticoes must have been the work of men a hundred feet high!" Imagination sinks abashed at the foot of the hypostyle hall of Karnac. It is said there are two portraits remaining of the Egyptian wife of Solomon, both very beautiful; one at Karnac, and one in the valley of the Queens' Tombs. She is thought to have been part contributor to that production called Solomon's Songs, which consists of about forty lyrical pieces, in every variety of mood and measure; and she must have been as eminent for talent as for beauty.

L.

PANTHEISM AND ROMANISM. — The Christianity of the apostolic writings is throwing off, and is getting itself clear of, every thing which hitherto, through the medium of a diffused profession and of a conventional religiousness, it has come to be entangled with, but which is not its own, and with which it has no true alliance. Christianity is, as we believe, shaking off from its surface the encrustations of recent times; it is parting company with the multitude that of late has pressed about it, and thronged it, and is drawing itself off to the desert for converse with those who are not offended with it as it is. — *Isaac Taylor.*

THE THREE BAPTISMS.

LEAVES FROM THE PARSONAGE.

It had been a lovely spring morning ; but the serene clear sky had become overcast with fleecy white clouds, and the soft south breeze had been chased away by a cold north-easter, which was sighing and whistling through the budding trees. We were at dinner, when a quick, impatient peal of the bell startled us from our quiet chat.

"Please, sir, Harry Raymond is very sick, and Mr. Raymond wishes you to go in there as soon as convenient."

Not a moment was wasted ; the half-finished plate was pushed aside ; and, with the speed of one ever ready to do his Master's bidding, the pastor set off for Mr. Raymond's. He had not far to go, but soon reached the house ; and, with noiseless steps, entered the half-opened door. The sound of smothered sobs and hushed voices guided him on ; and, in a moment, he stood by the bedside of the little sufferer. A sweet, lovely boy he was ; he had numbered seven summers ; but one glance at him was sufficient to show that the next would be passed in the garden of heaven, with angel-children for his playfellows, and angel-guides to teach and unfold his mind. Tossing and restless, he was ever in motion, — the small hands clutched the bed-clothes convulsively, — his cheeks were burning with fever, his eyes sunken, and the heavy lids were half closed over them. The mother had sunk down by him, her face buried in the pillow, while her whole form heaved with her suppressed sobs. The father stood erect and calm, gazing upon his child. The expression of anguish and deep suffering was on his brow. As the minister entered, Mr. Raymond turned eagerly to him ; and the flush of hope for one moment kindled in his face, as if he thought the disciple of the Lord at this day could work the same miracle which restored the daughter of Jairus to her father's arms, and blessed, with the life of her only one, the poor widow of Nain ; but, alas ! it is not for the most earnest disciple to restore health to the diseased frame, or kindle again the light of life in the dying eye. The most he can do is to brighten that eye with the hope of heaven,

and strengthen that frame by imparting to it the knowledge of the strength of the Lord.

"Ah! I am glad to see you," said Mr. Raymond, as he grasped eagerly at the proffered hand; "our darling boy is very ill; we fear he will die; how can we part with him?"

"God will give you strength, if you ask for it; and, if he recalls the spirit he loaned to you to train, you must feel it is done in love."

"Look at him, sir, and see if you can give me hope he will recover."

That word of hope could not be spoken. The work of death, that inscrutable seal which is the passport from this world to the other, was already stamped upon the sweet child-like face; the fever-flush was gradually passing away, and the frame becoming more quiet; but it was the torpor of death stealing over him. The pastor could not speak of hope for this life; and the simple, trite words of consolation seemed too meagre for such a time and scene; but he knelt down, and, with earnest words, strove to lift the thoughts of the suffering ones to the heaven of light and love into which their darling had so soon to be admitted. As he proceeded, the sobs of the mother became hushed; the father's face assumed a more resigned expression, and his whole manner indicated "Thy will be done." Ere the prayer was ended, the spirit of peace seemed to brood over the apartment.

"He has never been consecrated in baptism," said Mr. Raymond. "I trust it is not too late."

"Gladly will I commit the young spirit to the Saviour's charge in the rite which he commanded to be observed," said the pastor. "If you will give me water, I will make this dear child a member of Christ's fold on earth; then, when he reaches heaven, he will be welcomed as one of the lambs of his flock."

Water was brought; and, as the cool drops touched his brow, and the solemn words were spoken, — "Henry, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," the boy opened his deep-blue eyes, and a gleam of intelligence and joy lighted them up with supernatural brilliancy. Heaven seemed already dawning upon him; but the body was too weak to indicate the emotions thus excited, and he sank back into a lethargic state.

"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." "Come unto me, all ye

that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest ; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." " Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." With such words did the pastor strive to strengthen the sorrowing hearts, and impart to them the comfort he foresaw they would soon need, when the spirit of their beloved one would indeed pass home.

When he left them, they were calm ; but he promised to return before many hours. Towards night, he again entered the room. It was the same as when he left it, only now the physician stood by the bed, and his young brothers and sisters were clustered around their mother ; the elder boy's face was buried in her lap ; while the younger ones, sweet twins, scarcely passed infancy, gazed with wondering eyes upon their unconscious brother. The pastor approached the bed, knelt by it, and, as soon as he could command himself, the words of fervent petition arose to the heavenly throne. He prayed not that the precious life might be spared ; it was too late for that ; but he implored the Father to receive the pure spirit which was so soon to leave its earthly home ; and as he prayed, as if in sign that the prayer was answered, the spirit, without one struggle or one heavily drawn breath, flitted away from its earthly tenement ; and when the bowed heads were raised, and anxious looks were cast upon the precious one, the sweet smile that rested on his face told of the ineffable joy that greeted him. " The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord." " And he asked, Is it well with the child ? and she answered, It is well," said the pastor, as he grasped the father's hand.

" It is too much ; I cannot part with him ; he is all the world to me ; I cannot live without him," sobbed the heart-broken mother.

" O Emily ! say not so," said the husband, striving to keep down his own heart-bursting sorrow in the desire to soothe her more acute feeling. " We have our other children left ; we must love them more tenderly, care for them more fondly, and strive to fit them to meet our angel Harry, when they too shall be called to the spirit-world. We loved him too selfishly ; and perhaps that is why the good ' All-Father ' has removed him ; it gives us now a strong tie to the heavenly world, and may draw our thoughts, which cling so closely to earth, upward. God grant it may !"

" He has never known sin or sorrow here ; his brief day has

been a cloudless one," said the minister; "and you must take comfort from the thought that now he will be ever pure and holy. Temptation cannot come to him; but he will grow and develop under the very eye of Christ."

"Ah! that is but poor comfort when we feel he is lost to us," said the mother.

"Not *lost*, but gone before: he is your own child still, your angel-child; and, if you but let these thoughts draw your heart to heaven, you will find him ready to welcome you, when you, too, sooner or later, shall be summoned to the heavenly home."

How different was the next baptism! A beautiful day in summer, when all nature was jubilant. The birds sang a consecration-hymn as the parents wended their way through the shaded streets of our beautiful village. The sky was cloudless as the brow of a trusting Christian; the deep-blue mountains, piercing the cerulean ether, lifted the thoughts above; while the smooth, pellucid lake, mirroring the grand and lovely scenery around, seemed a fit emblem of sunny infancy, so calm withal, but in whose depths were hidden, to be hereafter developed, a wondrous power for good or ill. Serene and peaceful was the influence shed upon the anxious hearts of the parents, who were that day to carry their first-born to the sanctuary of the Lord! It was the half-hour before the afternoon-service. There was a lovely group collected around the altar, — sweet faces just budding into girlhood; manly, intelligent-looking boys, old enough to understand the holy rite; and the rosy, soft-dimpled faces of infancy, nestling close in their mothers' arms, with confiding trust, whilst they looked about with eager eyes; now fixing a glance of wonder on the minister, then turning to meet some familiar gaze or loving smile from the friends around.

Who can look upon that scene, and see those lovely ones, as yet unstained by crime, unsullied by falsehood, and not feel how beautiful, how pure, is the image of the Creator inwrought into those fragile forms! "Unless ye become like unto these little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven," seems to echo through the lofty church. Unless ye become like unto them in trusting faith, confiding love, in purity of thought, ye cannot be fit to see God. "Their angels ever behold the face of the Father."

How each parent's heart beats with holy emotion, as the child of its love receives the water of consecration ! How truly and earnestly did the inward prayer arise from the depths of their souls, that they might be strengthened to keep the promises this day made ; that they might guide aright those little feet in the way of truth ; that they should teach them to rest on God, and to be Christ-like in their lives ! Fathers forgot for a time the pressure of business, worldly cares and anxieties, and looked with softened eyes on the little ones to whom they were to be an example and guide ; and mothers thought every pleasure would hereafter centre in the one absorbing duty of rearing their children to usefulness and virtue.

Oh how joyfully did the recording angel bear up to heaven that night the record of the prayers and tears and holy consecration of that day ! Its record was traced in letters of light, and heavenly strength seemed to flow from the very words penned thereon. After the solemn service was over, the organ struck up its deep, lofty, and thrilling tones ; the bell commenced its stirring appeal, summoning all from far and near to the church of God ; and the aged ones, as they entered the gates, blessed the infants who were passing out ; for they recalled to them the time when they too were young, — when their withered and wrinkled brows were smooth and fair, — when their hair, now stiff and gray, waved in light curls, their rosy faces nestled on a mother's bosom, and a father's hand presented them for baptism.

A greater contrast could not be found than was offered by the third baptism. We entered a pleasant bedroom, evidently, however, the room of an invalid. Upon the bed was lying an aged person ; her hair, white as the driven snow, was smoothly parted on her brow, and concealed under a close-fitting muslin cap ; her cheeks were marked with the furrows of years ; but the eye was calm and placid, and told of that reposeful period when the soul is waiting its summons to join its loved ones, who have gone before. Around the bed were clustered the children of her youth, tall, stalwart men, and kind, loving women, who delighted to do honor to the good mother who had trained them to truth and virtue. The love and care of years rushed to their minds, as they stood gazing upon her ; and she waited so peacefully for the touching ceremony which, from early scruples and later ill health, had

been deferred. And yet another reason had delayed it. The servant of God who was this day to obey the command of his Master, "Go ye and baptize," had been nursed in her arms, and drawn from her the nourishment of his infancy. Almost her youngest born, she had watched over him with the deepest affection and interest; and, since he had consecrated himself to the ministry, it had been her desire that he alone should perform for her the holy rite.

All knelt around the bed, as, with a heart full to overflowing, the young minister poured out his petition before the heavenly throne. The holy duty before him inspired him with an eloquence unknown before. He wrestled, like the patriarch of old, with the spirit of the Lord, and seemed indeed to bring down a blessing upon the aged head. She, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, listened, as if longing to have the spirit upborne on the wings of that prayer; but the fond affection of that loving circle strove still to keep the soul from its upward flight. They plead for the beloved life to be spared yet a little longer; they could not give up the kind mother, the tried friend; the centre round which each little family circle revolved, binding closer the ties of fraternal affection, and shutting out the coldness and indifference which might, but for this uniting bond, creep in. The prayer was finished; the sparkling drops rested on the brow of the newly baptized. Nearly fourscore years had passed over her since she first entered this world; and now she stood upon the threshold of eternity, looking with an unshrinking eye for the raising of that veil which should open to her the life, light, and beauty of that wondrous world which should make visible to her couched eyes the glories of the Eternal Father and the risen Jesus, and reunite her to the beloved companion of her pilgrimage here, and free her mind and heart from those bonds which this earth must ever impose.

"Aged pilgrim, what for thee
In a world like this remains?
From thy guarded heart shall flee
Fear, and shame, and doubt, and pains.
Fear the hope of heaven shall free,
Shame from glory's view retire,
Doubt in full belief shall die,
Pain in endless bliss expire."

T. D. F. B.

THE METRE OF THE TREES.

BE still, my heart! and list awhile that dreamy, low, sweet psalm,
 And own that nature has the power thine inmost soul to calm;
 For, by the bend of that fair stream, a deep religious awe
 Has stolen into my soul with power to hush it evermore,
 Where nature's coronals have wreathed the river's shaded edge,
 And half a wreath a circle makes in shadow 'neath the sedge, —
 Where oft we rowed our tiny skiff, and culled the lilies fair,
 And decked it round, till it seemed proud its fragrant load to bear.

They say the woodland fays do wait, till mortals have passed by,
 To breathe into each other's ear their wild, unearthly cry;
 But still I fancy that the sounds those branches bear along
 Are broken fragments of some gentle angel's song;
 As for each earthly grief and joy they weave their leafy chant,
 And *to* the winds and *with* the winds all mortal things descant.
 I deem I hear the fluttering of pinions from on high,
 As if their wings were lingering yet, though tenants of the sky.
 Anon I hear a triumph-shout for souls released from sin,
 Who've veiled their eyes from earthly bliss to "let heaven's glory
 in."

Methinks I hear a spirit sigh and wail for the bereft, —
 A sigh that they in ignorance and heedless sin are left;
 And now the woods are ringing with a low and sad farewell,
 More sad than tongue of lover to his treasured love may tell;
 And now a merry pealing for all mortal sounds of joy,
 As if they claimed a sympathy with bliss they'd not destroy.

In vain, in vain, all hidden tones upon thine ear will burst;
 But *earthly tones* and *earthly loves* must be supplanted first;
 And with the spirit's eye and ear we then shall hear and see,
 And till that time how many things are veiled in mystery!

ARBITA.

MORAL DECISION;

OR, THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING ABLE TO SAY "NO."

A MIGHTY potency hath this little word NO, when uttered in a resolute spirit, and steadfastly adhered to, — uttered as a stern negative to all sinful enticements, — a mighty potency to silence the voice of temptation, and break and dissolve its charm. It will prove to us, when used for this purpose, a blessed talisman, guarding the weak and assailable points in our character, and enabling us to pass unscathed through every scene of moral danger and exposure which may meet us in the path of duty. It will give us power over all the wiles of the adversary, and nothing shall by any means harm us.

In the common business and intercourse of life, we are often obliged to witness scenes, to mix with company, to listen to conversation, to expose ourselves to many influences of a bad and corrupting tendency; and, unless we are armed with virtuous sentiments and principles, with a resolute spirit of *moral resistance*, we shall be sure to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. It is of the utmost consequence to us, therefore, if we would keep ourselves uncontaminated by the corruptions that are in the world, — if we would hold fast our innocence and integrity, — if we would maintain ourselves, at all times, on the high table-ground of thorough, consistent, uniform virtue, — it is of the *utmost* consequence to us to endeavor to cultivate and acquire that decision of character, that energy of purpose and principle, that moral independence and courage, that will enable us to say to the tempter, under whatever guise he may approach us, — "*No* : I will listen to none of your base suggestions. The gains you offer, the pleasures you spread out so alluringly before me, the distinctions you promise, are such as can be purchased only at the expense of honor and integrity. They are sinful. *No* : I will not touch, or taste, or handle them. Get thee behind me, Satan."

It is my purpose in the following article, as I have already indicated by its heading, to speak of moral decision; to show its importance and necessity as a safeguard against temptations; as the only means by which we can maintain an upright and vir-

tuous character, or accomplish any of the true and great objects of life.

By moral decision I mean a prompt and unwavering preference of right, and a resolute and undeviating pursuit of it, — a quick discernment and unhesitating choice of what is true and just. It is energy of purpose and principle, — an uncompromising determination to follow the dictates of conscience, be the consequences what they may. Moral decision, I would here remark, is by no means to be confounded with decision of character. The latter is a doubtful attribute; being little more than a prompt and powerful will, acting under the impulse of strong passions. It may exist, and often does exist, in connection with great depravity and villainy. The former, moral decision, is made up of the same strong elements; but they are guided and controlled by a quick sense of rectitude, and are directed to good and worthy objects. It is a noble and generous characteristic, and is *always* allied with virtue. It is energy of conscience, a strong determination of will to obey the law of right. It asks not, where justice and humanity are concerned, what is expedient, what does public opinion prescribe, or private interest demand, but simply what is right, what is the line of duty; and, this being clearly ascertained, it stops not to parley with difficulty or danger, but goes right ahead. In all cases where moral distinctions are involved, it says, — This is right, and I must do it; this is wrong, and I must avoid it; and it acts accordingly. It is strength of resolution for good, against which all outward resistance proves unavailing. It is a holy energy of soul, by which adverse events, unfavorable influences from without, temptations and trials of every sort, are not only overcome and neutralized, but converted into means of wholesome discipline, and made subservient, in the end, to virtue and happiness. The man who possesses this noble attribute does not passively yield to the pressure of outward things, nor suffer them to mould and shape his character, or determine his destiny. No: he is not mastered by circumstances, but masters them. He controls them, and compels them to minister to his improvement and usefulness. When Paul could say, in view of the bonds and imprisonments that awaited him, "None of these things move me," he was superior to circumstances, — he was master of himself and of his destiny, — he was mightier than all the world; for he had vanquished

it, put it under his feet, by the force of a mighty will, — by an energy of faith which brought him into an alliance with Omnipotence, and before which principalities and powers, thrones and dominions, and all the gauds and glories of earth, vanished into nothingness.

Moral courage, I need hardly say, is an essential element in a strong and decisive character. He to whom this character belongs is as fearless as he is prompt and energetic. He can defy scorn and ridicule; he has no dread of difficulties and dangers, — of opposition from high or low, when they must be encountered in obedience to duty. He will neither waver nor flinch, when called to decide between right and wrong, — between freedom and slavery, — between the claims of humanity and the demands of the oppressor, but will stand up manfully for truth and justice, though power may threaten, and the world frown, and friends desert him. He will make no compromise with iniquity, regarding all such compromises as treason against conscience, — as a deliberate and cowardly desertion of the right, — as a bargaining with the devil, — as a Judas-like selling of his Lord for money. True to his convictions, he will not wink at popular errors or fashionable vices, nor “affect to countenance bad men and measures, because a strong public sentiment sustains them.” He is one, in short, whom neither difficulty nor peril can frighten from the straight and narrow way of right, — who will cling to duty calm and self-possessed, though opposition in every shape may rise up around him, “and all be adverse, save conscience and God.”

The basis of this principle is faith, — faith in truth and right, — faith in their infinite worth and paramount obligation, and faith in that Power who is their supreme and perfect embodiment; an assured confidence that he will protect and bless those who are loyal to duty and conscience, — bless them in conflict, in suffering, in death, and even through their instrumentality. It was in the true elevation of this character that a great and good man once replied to his friends, who would have dissuaded him from a perilous enterprise, to which duty called him: “It is necessary for me to go, but it is not necessary for me to live.” But the sublimest exemplification of this spirit, perhaps, ever given by a human being, was exhibited by Luther at the Diet of Worms, to which he had been summoned to answer for his

heresies. There he sat, calm and self-sustained, in the midst of a host of haughty and implacable enemies, who were longing to heap up the fagots around him. There was nothing that savored of defiance in his manner or bearing, and yet the settled purpose of his soul might be discerned in his countenance. He acknowledged, on being questioned to that effect, that he was the author of those writings which were the grounds of his arraignment; and when it was demanded of him to say, unequivocally, whether he would retract them or not, he replied, with a gentleness and intrepidity that astonished his enemies, "No; I neither can nor will retract any thing. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. May God help me!"

Such is moral decision. It is the result of a clear perception and earnest preference of the right, and a concentrated energy of will to do it. Without a principle of this kind, we can attain to no consistency or firmness of character. We shall be unstable in our principles, unsettled in our views and judgments, the sport of diverse and casual impulses. The mind that is wholly devoid of this spirit is feeble and vacillating, — a pitiable atom floating at random on the ocean of uncertainty. It has no opinions but such as chance bestows, — no standard of right and wrong but the uncertain and variable one derived from the world around it. Such a mind can hardly be called a *mind*, a self-conscious, self-determining principle within. It is the mere creature of outward circumstances and influences. Having no principle of resistance, no self-guiding, self-governing power in its own inward life, it becomes just what accident happens to make it. Nothing truly great can ever be accomplished by those who are deficient in this element of character. Unsettled in their plans, fickle in their purposes, unstable in all things, they can never excel. It is astonishing what a difference the presence or absence of this quality will create in the character and condition of different persons. Many years ago, I knew two young men who entered an academy together, and became class-mates. They were nearly of the same age, and not very different perhaps in mental endowments. One of them started with the fixed determination of getting an education, and preparing himself for the legal profession. Steady to his purpose, he studied hard, surmounted every obstacle, cleared his way before him with the resistless energy of one who had a strong ruling passion and a single aim,

wrestling himself into strength by grappling with difficulties. Without halting or wavering, he pressed on to the goal, straining all his energies to reach it. That goal has long since been reached. He has already achieved an enviable reputation, and risen to influence, wealth, and distinguished usefulness. The other, though irregular and intermittent in his application to study, was not destitute of ambition. He would be and do something in the world; but he hardly knew what. At one time he talked of going to college; at another time he thought he should learn some mechanical trade. Now he would be a merchant, now a physician; and then a lawyer, an editor, a politician, — framing a thousand schemes, but never applying himself, with energy and perseverance, to the means by which any one of them could be realized. On leaving school, this indecision of character followed him; and so he went on without any definite plans or fixed aims, till the best portion of his life was frittered away, and now he has sunk down into a state of mental and physical imbecility as pitiful as it is contemptible.

But it was my design, in the selection of this subject, to consider moral decision chiefly as a safeguard against the temptations of life, and especially those which throng and press around the path of youthful inexperience. I owe, said a gentleman to me not long ago, — a merchant of high respectability, intelligence, and moral worth, — I owe all my success in life, my character, my social standing, whatever I may have attained or become, to the power that by the grace of God was given me to say NO, just when and where it ought to be said, and to stick to it. He went to Boston, he told me, when about eighteen years old, a raw, inexperienced country lad, and entered a situation which had been obtained for him, as clerk in a store. Thus, far from home and home influences, was he thrown at once into all the novelties and excitements and manifold temptations of a great city. He was not, however, without a talisman to guard him from danger. He had been religiously nurtured, — taught the great lessons of self-denial, self-restraint, and self-dependence; and, on leaving home, a father's counsels and prayers, and a mother's tender warnings, had served greatly to deepen and fortify his good resolutions. Soon his principles were put to the test. One evening, just as he had shut up the store, several young men came up to him, and asked him to go with them to a certain place, which

they described, — one of those scenes where vice holds out its most luring baits to ensnare the sinful. He answered civilly, but promptly, firmly, and most emphatically, NO ! This NO he was accustomed to say, though it exposed him to some ridicule at the time, was the turning-point in his destiny. Had he yielded to the solicitation of those young men, and gone with them, in all probability he would have been drawn on, step by step, into a career of dissipation and profligacy, that would have proved his ruin. This NO, too, so prompt and decisive, saved him from all further solicitations of the kind. His evenings he spent at his lodgings, amusing and improving himself by the perusal of useful books. His sobriety, attention to business, and trustworthiness, won for him, at length, respect and confidence ; and he has, long since, become a partner in the firm which he once served as a shop-boy. Oh, how mournfully does this case contrast with that of another young man with whom I was once acquainted ! He was a beautiful, frank-hearted, noble-spirited youth, of generous sentiments and manly bearing, but, withal, rash, impulsive, fond of gaiety and amusement, and sadly wanting in moral stability. He went to New York, and entered a store. Here the tempter was not long in finding him out. Loose companions gathered around him, and soon led him into those ways which go down to death, and take hold on hell. He became intemperate and dissolute. The usual consequences followed. He lost his reputation, the confidence of his employer, and his own self-respect. And, more deplorable still, he lost the power, the will, and almost the desire, to emerge from his degradation. Vice had thrown her polluting and paralyzing folds around him, and written out her unmistakable signatures upon his once handsome and ingenuous countenance. His career was a short one. He descended rapidly from one grade of dissipation to another, till he became a confirmed and hopeless inebriate, and went down to a dishonored grave. And all this shame and woe came upon him because he had not the resolution to say to the enticer to evil, whether from within or without, NO ! “ If sinners entice thee,” says the wise man, “ consent thou not. Enter not into the path of the wicked ; go not in the way of evil men ; avoid it, — pass not by it, — turn from it, and pass away.” Yes, my youthful reader, you must hold no parley with sin, if you would not become its victim and slave. You must not even listen to the siren voice of temptation,

nor suffer your imagination to gaze upon the pleasures she depicts. All that temptation asks of you is to look upon her, — to look upon the wine when it moveth itself aright in the cup, — to think with desire of what you cannot touch without pollution and death, — to suffer your thoughts to rove and riot unrestrained amid scenes of revelry and voluptuousness. This is all she asks of you ; and, if you cannot meet there her earliest advances with a resolute NO, you are lost. She will first gain over your passions, then deceive your reason, then blind and pervert your conscience, then throw the chains of habit around you, then lead you utterly astray from God.

Temptations are of two classes : those which spring from our own propensities and passions, and those which grow out of the evil influences which surround us. "A man is tempted," says St. James, "when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed." In whatsoever shape the temptation may assail us, — whether in that of avarice, bidding us clutch the gains of dishonesty, — or of ambition, urging us to barter honor and conscience for office, — or of pleasure, inviting us to yield to those indulgencies which are criminal and ruinous, — it must be resisted firmly and resolutely, if we would walk in the path of the just, and keep ourselves unspotted from the world. This faculty of resistance, so important an element in the virtue we are now considering, let us give all diligence to cultivate and acquire. Yes, let us put forward an uncompromising and everlasting NO against all that is sinful, and it will disarm and break the force of every temptation. Resist the devil, and he will flee from thee.

But the temptations by which we are most frequently and often unconsciously drawn aside from the path of rectitude are those which arise from the influence of bad example, — of the evil customs and fashions which prevail in society around us. Few have the hardihood to resist this influence. Fashion is a potent word. It can so pervert the judgment and blind the conscience as to lead us to call evil good, and good evil. It furnishes a pretext for much of the wrong-doing in the world, and for most of its follies. We are not aware how much we are governed and deluded by this spirit, so mysterious in its origin, yet so mighty in its sway. Many are unconsciously so ruled by it, that they seem to have no mind or principles of their own. Their opinions are cast in the great mould of public opinion, and receive its

shape. Their morals, their politics, their religion, they take, as they do the cut of their garments, from the patterns and types which chance to be most in vogue; nay, their very tastes and sentiments come to them ready-made, and marked and labelled as fashionable. It is this social servility carried into every thing, "from the tie of a neckcloth to the points of a creed," which, more than any thing else, helps to keep alive so many errors and follies, and to transmit them from one generation to another; and it exerts a worse influence still, — an influence positively demoralizing, — when it keeps in countenance, as it often does, customs and practices which are confessedly sinful. How few of us have courage and firmness enough to withstand this influence, — to stand forth as non-conformists in regard to every custom and usage which we feel to be wrong! On the contrary, we *must* do, we say, as other people do. We should not like to be called singular. And so we go on doing as other people do, crying out against the sins of the times, and still practising them, — condemning and denouncing certain fashionable vices which might be named; and yet, when we find ourselves in the circles where they prevail, readily yielding to them, thus contributing to swell and deepen the current of sin, which we should have resisted. But how unworthy, how inconsistent, nay, how wicked, is all this! how far from the spirit of that precept which says, "Thou shalt *not* follow a multitude to do evil"! It will not justify you or me in any sin because others practise it. We have a standard and a law given us by which we ought to judge ourselves, and by which we shall assuredly be judged. Whatever, then, we know and feel to be right, let us do, though we stand alone in doing it; and whatever we know and feel to be wrong, let us avoid, though all the world practise it. Let us, in fine, dare to be consistent Christians, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. And in proportion as the community in which we live is lax in morals, or negligent in regard to the duties and claims of religion, let us feel an added obligation to show our respect and reverence for them in all our conduct and conversation.

In conclusion, let us remember that the decision of which we have been speaking, to be a *perfect* moral safeguard, must be imbued with, guided and hallowed by, a spirit of faith, piety, and prayer. Prayer is an unfailing source of spiritual strength. It brings down help from above, — it generates a state of mind which

renders us superior to all the seductions of the world. Let us, then, gird on this sword of the spirit, by which we shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the adversary. Let us take to ourselves the whole armor of God, that so we may be able to stand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.

C. R.

A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO A SABBATH SCHOLAR, DURING THE SUMMER RECESS.

MY DEAR L. — You have not been to see me this week, as you promised; and now our weekly meetings are over for the season. Amid the dissipations to which you are so eagerly looking forward, there will be no voice to remind you of the true objects of life; and so I am moved to lift mine to you once more, though its utterances may be listened to but to be forgotten. The visits you have paid me, the conversations we have had, have left none other than a mournful impression. I cannot see that they have amounted to any thing. I do not know exactly why you came. Sometimes, it seems to me, it is because the spirit of God is striving with you, and will not let your conscience rest; and so you come to the one who tells you the truth always, secretly hoping perhaps that you can be shown some way of salvation that shall not involve so much self-sacrifice, that shall assure you of final safety, and yet let you do just as you please while you live.

I could have reason to despond, as a Sunday-school teacher, when I think of you, and ask, What more can I do? It is a long while now since I began to warn and to entreat you to listen to the voice of the Son of God. It may be that these warnings and entreaties, unheeded, may be treasured up against you. "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, we see; therefore your sin remaineth."

I know where the trouble lies; but I do not know how to make you see it with my vision. I shall not cease to pray that *God* will change your heart, while there is yet time. One trouble is that you are *thoughtless*; but there is no excuse in that for one so nearly numbering twenty summers, even if there ever is an

excuse for it. Your thoughtlessness is sin, — thoughtless of things pertaining to your soul's welfare. You think enough, and more than enough, about your pleasures and your annoyances, about your dress, and the flattery and adulation you receive; but you do not find leisure or inclination to think about your soul, and your accountability for its salvation. All your pleasures and annoyances will have an end, — all the conquests of your vanity will cease; but your soul, with its accusing memories, will never leave you. Be warned in season, lest you shall have to say, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, *and we are not saved.*" Do you think I mean to frighten you into being thoughtful? I am willing to do so, if I cannot *persuade* you. We are told, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." It is certainly a fearful thing to see a human soul "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath." We have too vivid a sense of the certainty of retribution not to long to save any from its penalties. If "the goodness of God" will not "lead to repentance," then would we call upon the "terrors of the Lord" to persuade men.

Another trouble is, you do not realize the *sin* of your life. You have no conviction of the wickedness of the way you are living. You make no account of the waste of time and faculty and strength. You think all this wickedness, frivolity, and vanity very harmless, and imagine you can, when you choose, turn and serve the Lord, as if you had never wandered from him. You forget that "he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." You are living upon excitement, and yet are weary of pleasures that fall upon the satiated appetite. You are becoming mistrustful and censorious. You complain of the selfishness and insincerity of the world. It is your own self you should accuse. It is your own heart that is getting further and further away from truth and singleness and simplicity. It is possible to get so far away that you "can find no place for repentance, though you seek it carefully, and with tears." You *can* harden your heart to all good influences; you can grieve God's Holy Spirit, until it will strive with you no more; but I will not, dear L., think of that as being your state. It is too mournful for me. Oh! let me persuade you to think, to read your Bible, to pray for a new heart, until the conviction of all your sin breaks upon you, and you put off for ever that robe of conceit

and self-righteousness you have hitherto kept folded so closely around you, and take in its stead garments made white in the blood of the Lamb. It will be a happy day for your teacher when she shall know your prayer is, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" for then she will know something "of the joy of the angels in heaven." That that day may come, she will not cease to implore God in your behalf.

Affectionately and faithfully yours,

A.

TWO KINDS OF PREACHING.

WE can many of us recall the recollection of those over-crowding times when a preacher of unmatched power and grace, a perfect orator, used to fix every eye upon himself, through his hour of fluent and affluent sublimities. How did all faces gleam with an intensity of intellectual enjoyment, longing to vent itself in loud acclamations at every pause! And when that hour of fascination was over, what looks of gratulation were exchanged among friends from pew to pew! What shaking of hands, and how many smiles and nods passed to and fro among the delighted people!

But now all these pleasurable indications must be dismissed; for it is a Methodist of Wesley's or of Whitefield's order that is in this same pulpit. As a preacher, he is not more sincere and right-minded than the last; and, as an orator, he is far less highly gifted: he is not so accomplished a theologian; nor in any sense is he rather to be chosen than the other, as to his dispositions or endowments, or as to his creed; but he is a Methodist, and his words sink into the hearts of those that hear. While he speaks, a suppressed anxiety rules the spirits of the crowd, and this feeling breaks forth into sighs on every side; the preacher's style is not, in itself, oratorically affecting, and yet many weep; and an expression, not to be simulated, of anguish and of dread, marks many faces. What is it, then, that has taken place? It is this, that a sense, deep seated in the structure of human nature, but which has hitherto slumbered, has suddenly woke up. There is a tumult in the soul, while a power irresistible is claiming its rights over both body and soul. Instead of that interchange of smiles which lately had pervaded the congregation, while the orator was doing his

part, now every man feels himself, for the hour, alone in that crowd. Even the preacher is almost forgotten; for an immortal and guilty spirit has come into the presence of Eternal Justice. Within the dismayed heart, it is as if the moral condition, hitherto unheeded, were spread abroad for strictest scrutiny. Quite gone from the thoughts are all those accessories of religious feeling, which so often, in times past, had been the source of agreeable devout excitement. It is a dread of the supreme rectitude that now holds the mind and heart.

There is a fine line of demarkation which it would be no easy task to trace across the broad field of evangelic pulpit-exercises; but on the one side of which the *message* is listened to and thought of; and, on the other, the messenger, and his mode and his merits in delivering it. On the one side of this invisible line is the Methodism of the last century; on the other, what we may hear anywhere, and every Sunday; and let it be acknowledged that what we may thus hear is, for the most part, sound and commendable, sometimes admirable, and far from being wholly ineffective; but on the Methodistic side, if in these times it were to be heard, there are words of power, in the hearing of which the human spirit, vanquished and trembling, yet full of hope, bows in presence of the Infinite Majesty, who, having taken upon himself the sins of the world, and abolished death, is able, as willing, to deliver from sin and wrath all that come to him, willing thus to be rescued. — *Isaac Taylor.*

BAPTISM. — Wesley at length permitted his preachers to administer the sacraments, and therefore to baptize infants. But where there is no church, where children are not thought of as "members of Christ," and where they come under no discipline as such, the rite of baptism, administered in infancy, is a five minutes' operation; profitless, perplexing, unintelligible, and out of harmony, as well with the Christian scheme, as with the system under which it takes place. An incongruity, not perceived by the parties, but yet serious, was it when these preachers, whose function was only convert-making, welcomed infants into a society from which they were instantly afterward thrust out, or thenceforth forgotten by it, until they were of an age to listen to sermons. — *Isaac Taylor.*